NUMB. CCXCII.

The SPECTATOR.

Πᾶσιν γὰρ ἀφρονῆσι συμμαχεῖ τύχη. Frag. Vet. Po.

Tuesday, February 5. 1712.

THE Famous *Gratian*, in his little Book wherein he lays down Maxims for a Man's advancing himſelf at Court, adviſes his Reader to aſſociate himſelf with the Fortunate, and to ſhun the Company of the Unfortunate; which, notwithſtanding the Baſeneſs of the Precept, to an honeſt Mind, may have ſomething uſeful in it for thoſe who puſh their Intereſt in the World. It is certain a great part of what we call Ill Fortune, riſes out of right or wrong Steps, and Schemes of Life. When I hear a Man complain of his being unfortunate in all his Undertakings, I ſhrewdly ſuſpect him for a very Imprudent Man in his Affairs. In conformity with this way of thinking, Cardinal *Richlieu* uſed to ſay, that Cowardice and Imprudent, were but two words for the ſame thing. As the Cardinal himſelf had a great Reputation of Prudence and Good-Fortune, his famous Rival, the Count *d'Olivarez*, was diſgraced at the Court of *Madrid*, becauſe it was alledged againſt him that he had never any Succeſs in his Undertakings. This, ſays an Eminent Author, was *indirectly* charging him of Imprudence.

Velleius recommended *Pompey* to the *Romans* for their General upon three Accounts, as he was a Man of Courage, Conduct and Good-Fortune. It was, perhaps, for the Reaſon abovementioned, namely, that a Series of Good-Fortune ſuppoſes a prudent Management in him to whom it befalls, that not only *Sylla* the Dictator, but ſeveral of the *Roman* Emperors, as is to be ſeen upon their Medals, aſſumed to themſelves that of *Felix*, or Fortunate. The Athenians, indeed, ſeem to have valued a Man chiefly for his Good-Fortune than for any other Quality, which I think is very natural for thoſe who had not a ſtrong Belief of another World. For can I conceive a Man crowned with many temporal Bleſſings, that has not ſome extraordinary Meaſure of Merit and Perfection in him, which may recommend him to the Supream Eye, tho' perhaps it is not diſcovered by my Obſervation? What is the Reaſon *Homer's* and *Virgil's* Heroes do not form a Battle, or ſtrike a Blow, without the Conduct and Aſſiſtance of ſome Deity? Doubtleſs, becauſe they eſteemed it the greateſt Honour to be favoured by the Gods, and thought the beſt way of praiſing a Man was to recount thoſe Favours which implied an extraordinary Merit in the Perſon on whom they deſcended.

Thoſe who believe a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments act very abſurdly, if they form their Opinions of a Man's Merit from his Succeſſes. But certainly, if I thought the whole Circle of our Being was concluded between our Births and Deaths, I ſhould think a Man's Good-Fortune the Meaſure and Standard of his real Merit, ſince Providence would have no Opportunity of rewarding his Virtue and Perfections, but in the preſent Life. A Vertuous Unbeliever, who lies under the Preſſure of Misfortunes, has reaſon to cry out, as they ſay *Brutus* did a little before his Death, *O Vertue, I have worſhiped thee as a Subſtantial Good, but I find thou art an empty Name.*

But to return to our firſt Point. Tho' Prudence does undoubtedly in a great meaſure produce our good or ill Fortune in the World, it is certain there are many unforeſeen Accidents and Occurrences, which very often pervert the fineſt Schemes that can be laid by Human Wiſdom. The Race is not always to the Swift, nor the Battel to the Strong. Nothing leſs than infinite Wiſdom can have an abſolute Command over Fortune; the higheſt degree of it which Man can poſſeſs, is by no means equal to fortuitous Events, and to ſuch Contingencies as may riſe in the Proſecution of our Affairs. Nay, it very often happens, that Prudence, which has always in it a great mixture of Caution, hinders a Man from being ſo fortunate as he might poſſibly have been without it. A Perſon who only aims at what is likely to ſucceed, and follows cloſely the Dictates of Human Prudence, never meets with thoſe great and unforeſeen Succeſſes, which are often the effect of a Sanguine Temper, or a more happy Raſhneſs; and this perhaps may be the Reaſon, that according to the common Obſervation, Fortune, like other Females, delights rather in favouring the young than the old.

Upon the whole, ſince Man is ſo ſhort-ſighted a Creature, and the Accidents which may happen to him ſo various, I cannot but be of Dr. *Tillotſon's* Opinion in another Caſe, that were there any doubt of a Providence, yet it certainly would be very deſirable that there ſhould be ſuch a Being of infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, on whoſe Direction we might rely in the Conduct of Human Life.

It is a great Preſumption to aſcribe our Succeſſes to our own Management, and not to eſteem our ſelves upon any Bleſſing, rather as it is the Bounty of Heaven, than the Acquiſition of our own Prudence. I am very well pleaſed with a Medal which was ſtruck by Queen *Elizabeth* a little after the Defeat of the Invincible Armada, to

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perpetuate the Memory of that extraordinary Event. It is well known how the King of *Spain*, and others who were the Enemies of that great Princess, to derogate from her Glory, ascribed the Ruin of their Fleet rather to the Violence of Storms and Tempests, than to the Bravery of the *English*. Queen *Elizabeth*, instead of looking upon this as a Diminution of her Honour, valued her self upon such a signal Favour of Providence; and accordingly in the Reverse of the Medal above-mentioned, a Fleet beaten by a Tempest, and falling foul upon one another, with that Religious Inscripion, *Afflavit Deus & dissipantur. He blew with his Wind, and they were scattered.*

It is remarked of a famous *Grecian* General, whose Name I cannot at present recollect, and who had been a particular Favourite of Fortune, that upon recounting his Victories among his Friends, he added at the end of several great Actions, *And in this Fortune had no share.* After which it is observed in History, that he never prospered in any thing he undertook.

As Arrogance, and a Conceitedness of our own Abilities, are very shocking and offensive to Men of Sense and Vertue, we may be sure they are highly displeasing to that Being who delights in an humble Mind, and by several of his Dispensations seems purposely to shew us, that our own Schemes or Prudence have no share in our Advancement.

Since on this Subject I have already admitted several Quotations which have occurred to my Memory upon writing this Paper, I will conclude it with a little *Persian* Fable. A Drop of Water fell out of a Cloud into the Sea, and finding it self lost in such an Immensity of fluid Matter, broke out into the following Reflection: 'Alas! What an insignificant 'Creature am I in this prodigious Ocean of Waters; 'my Existence is of no significancy to the Universe, 'I am reduced to a kind of nothing, and am less 'than the least of the Works of God. It so happened, that an Oyster, which lay in the neighbourhood of this Drop, chanced to gape and swallow it up in the midst of this his humble Soliloquy. The Drop, says the Fable, lay a great while hardning in the Shell, 'till by degrees it was ripen'd into a Pearl, which falling into the Hands of a Diver, after a long Series of Adventures, is at present that famous Pearl which is fixed on the Top of the *Persian* Diadem.

The First and Second Volumes of the SPECTATOR *in* 8vo *are now ready to be delivered to the Subscribers, by* J. Tonson *at* Shakespear's *Head over-against* Catherine-street *in the* Strand.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

By Her Majesty's Company of Comedians,

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane this present Tuesday, the 5th Day of February, will be presented a Play call'd, The Fatal Marriage: Or, The Innocent Adultery.

AT the Queen's Theatre in the Hay-Market, on Thursday next, being the 7th Day of February, will be perform'd an Opera called Rinaldo. To begin exactly at six. No Person to stand on the Stage.

Stole last Night from Charles Lillie's Shop at the Corner of Beauford-Buildings in the Strand, a Copper Jar, which held about 10 Gallons, with about 6 Gallons of Orange-Flower-water in it. If such a Jar, either with or without the Water, be offered to Sale, you are desired to stop it, and give Notice to Mr. Lillie, or on recovery of it, promised half a Guinea reward.

A new House two Rooms on a Floor, with a Closet or Dressing Room, No. 12. in Gloucester-street near Queen-street and the Chapel, very neatly fitted up for the Quarter, is now to be Lett by Lease or otherwise. Enquire at the House.

At Richmond in Surry, the House of the late Lord Haversham is to be Let, Furnished or Unfurnished, or the Lease to be Sold, with or without Furniture; the Offices are very convenient, there is a pleasant Garden well planted with Wall Fruit, two Coach-houses and Stables for six Horses. Enquire at Mr. Appley's in Surrey-lane, or at Mr. Jollies at the Black Lyon in St. Paul's Church-yard, or at the House at Richmond.

For SALE by the CANDLE.

This Day being the 5th Instant, at Lloyd's Coffee-house in Lombard-street, at 4 in the Afternoon, (only One Pipe in a Lot) viz. 13 Pipes of excellent —— Brandy; being of the true Flavour, imported by the Herbert Galley, that has arrived from Leghorn, and landed the last Week: Now in Keeler (fronting the Thames) next the Bath Gateway at Galley-key, between the Custom house and Tower dock. To be seen, and to be had this Day till the time of Sale. To be sold by Tho. Tomkins, Broker in Seething-lane in Tower-street.

At the Mountain Wine Cellar under the New South-Sea Coffee house in Broad-street, is sold by retail the Mountain Malaga Wine at 6 s. 8 d. per Gallon or 12. 9d. per Bottle; a fresh parcel lately landed, and of the best Quality, and Vidonia Wine at 13 d. per Bottle; such Persons as take Ten Gallons shall pay but 12 s. there being 13 Bottles, warranted all neat from the Grape.

Green and Bohea Tea much cheaper than has been sold some Years, Chocolate made of Cracco Nuts only 2 s. 8 d. per Pound, Choco'ate made of Cracco and Martinico Nuts, of each the same quantity, 2 s. 4 d. a Pound. Sold at a Warehouse in Russel-street, next Door to the Fleece, fronting Row-Street, Covent Garden, by Robert Fary's Druggist in Grace-church-street; where Cracco and Martinico Nuts may be had, no place cheaper.

If J. G. (who met a Gentleman at the Rose and Sceptre Tavern in St. Martin's-lane last Tuesday Night about Clock, and he might have Manuscripts,) will give himself the Trouble of letting the said Gentleman know where he may be found, he will shew him some that remain, which relate to that Subject, which he accidentally found among other Papers. Note, the Gentleman intends to go out of Town on Friday.

A Print of the Right Honourable John Lord Somers Baron of Evesham, Engraved from a Painting by Sir Godfrey Kneller, by George Vertue. Printed for Jacob Tonson at Shakespear's Head over-against Catherine-street in the Strand.

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